

University of Dundee

Ambiguous Becoming

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Jérôme Havre, Cauleen Smith
& Camille Turner

Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau

Victoria Sin

Artists' Moving Image from Canada
24 January – 22 February 2020

Cooper Gallery DJCAD
x MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image

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Event Series

Preview: In-conversation & Performance

Thursday 23 January, 5.30–7.30pm

— In-conversation: **Maude Johnson** (Executive and Curatorial Assistant of MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image) and **Kitty Anderson** (Director of LUX Scotland) on the context of artists' moving image practices in Canada and Scotland

— **Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau** present *Becoming Unreal* (2018–ongoing), performed by Soprano **Eilidh Thomson**

Outwith Reading Group

what it is to go further...

Tuesday 28 January, 5.30–7.30pm

A discursive reading group on the politics of visibility and what it means to belong, led by artist **Emmie McLuskey**. For reading material and to sign-up contact: exhibitions@dundee.ac.uk

Arresting Masculinity: Anger, Hybridity and the Persistence of Patriarchy in the 21st Century

Wednesday 12 February, 5.30–7pm

Cooper Gallery hosts a talk by **Professor Dany Nobus** as part of the Philosophy Seminar Series organised by Scottish Centre for Continental Philosophy.

SCRIEVE | Playwriting scratch night

Thursday 20 February, 6–8pm

Cooper Gallery hosts a session of SCRIEVE's regular playwriting scratch nights, sharing new scripts in response to the exhibition themes. To participate or attend contact: scrievedundee@gmail.com

All events are free and held at Cooper Gallery.

The human body in all of its iterations is performative. Grounded by materiality, our bodies are caught forever in a flux of becoming, responsive to the innumerable possibilities of being immutably different and other.

Bringing together a broad spectrum of artists and collaborations from Canada, the exhibition draws out and delineates the rich scope of aesthetic, critical, and philosophical positions underscoring the politics of the performative body. Recognising the implicit struggles against colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism waged on and within the body, the exhibition actively asserts the necessity of claiming ownership of the body throughout its performative and discursive iterations.

Indicating and referencing the multitude of cultures, psychologies, identities, and genders at stake in the artists' works, the exhibition addresses the dynamics of power and its resistant double, the unrestrained agency of becoming. Underscored by this ambition *Ambiguous Becoming* offers a portrayal of bodies in the moment of their resistance to the twin horrors of objectification and unfettered consumption.

In their collaborative video work *Triangle Trade* (2017), Jérôme Havre, Cauleen Smith, and Camille Turner engage with what blackness means in a colonial context composed of the displacement and deterritorialization haunting the after effects of the slave trade. Following a cross-borders conversation, each artist created an avatar puppet and a distinct world to represent themselves. Activated by the artists, the avatars move through their respective surroundings; simultaneously isolated and connected.

Artist duo Chloë Lum and Yannick Desranleau present the two-channel video installation *What Do Stones Smell Like in the Forest?* (2018), accompanied by the live performance *Becoming Unreal* (2018). *What Do Stones Smell Like in the Forest?* shows, on two adjacent screens, a singer and a choir, between them is woven a narrative of chronic illness expressed through a multifold relationship with objects. In these videos, questions of agency and liveness constantly switch between beings and things. Examining the active role of objects, the work considers the restrictive and supportive capacities of bodies—both human and non-

human ones. Performed by a soprano at the exhibition preview, *Becoming Unreal* offers a duet between a performing body and the objects that carry its gestures and weight.

In their video series *Narrative Reflections on Looking* (2016–17), Victoria Sin addresses issues of identification with images, especially in relation to the construction of gender and cultural identity through language, and highlights the dynamics of power that reside in the act of looking. From a non-binary position and through drag aesthetics, Sin performs femininity as a fluid concept that is not essential to womanhood and not natural to any particular body.

Partner Organisation

MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image is a contemporary art event taking place in various venues in Montréal (Canada) every two years since 1989. Founded as Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, the organization was renamed MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image in 2017. Its activities include exhibitions, public events, educational programs, artistic and social collaborations, and more.

Ambiguous Becoming is a collaboration between Cooper Gallery DJCAD, University of Dundee, (Scotland) and MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image (Montréal, Canada).



Jérôme Havre, Cauleen Smith, and Camille Turner,
Triangle Trade (video still), 2017

Jérôme Havre, Cauleen Smith, and Camille Turner

Jérôme Havre is a Toronto based artist inspired by the production of natural history dioramas in museums and zoos. He develops in his creations reflexive spaces through immersive processes. He looks for ways to do this through presentation, the creation of situations, or setting the stage with his sculptures and inviting the public to take part “in the show.” Jérôme’s work interrogates issues of identity, territory and community through the representation of nature. That is, the manner in which it is presented and yet can be more readily perceived through our cultural filters.

His projections, solo and group exhibitions include *#7 clous à Marseille*, Patrick Raynaud, Marseille, 2019; *The Life of Things*, MOMENTA Biennale de l’image, Montréal, 2019; *Triangle Trade*, Gallery TPW, Toronto, 2017; *Viene Così naturale ou la vie immuable—An Unchangeable Life*, 8eleven, Toronto, 2017; *The Morning Shines With the Lights of Love*, Clint Roenisch Gallery, Toronto, 2017; *Untitled (2010)*, Yaletown–Roundhouse Station, Vancouver, 2016; *Yonder*, Koffler Gallery, Toronto, 2016; *Liminal / Necessity and Accident*, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, 2016; *La fabrique de l’image*, 14°N 61°W, Martinique, 2015; *Talking Back, Otherwise*, Jackman Humanities Institute, Toronto, 2015.

Cauleen Smith is an interdisciplinary artist whose work reflects upon the everyday possibilities of the imagination. Operating in multiple materials and arenas, Smith roots her work firmly within the discourse of mid-twentieth-century experimental film. Drawing from structuralism, third world cinema, and science fiction, she makes things that deploy the tactics of these disciplines while offering a phenomenological experience for spectators and participants. Smith is based in the great city of Chicago and serves as faculty for the Vermont College of Fine Arts low-residency MFA program.

Her recent projections, solo and group exhibitions include: *The Life of Things*, MOMENTA Biennale de l'image, Montréal, 2019; *Give It Or Leave It*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 2018; *Cauleen Smith: Black Utopia LP*, Tate Modern, London, 2018; *In The Wake (A Procession)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2017; Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2017; *Human_3.0 Reading List*, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 2017; *The Warplands*, UAG Gallery—University of California, Irvine, 2017; *Conduct Your Blooming*, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 2016; *Asterisms*, Center for Contemporary Art and Culture, Portland, 2016; *Conduct Your Blooming*, Corbett vs Dempsey, Chicago, 2016. Website: cauleensmith.com

Camille Turner is a Toronto based artist. She is an explorer of race, space, home and belonging. Straddling media, social practice and performance art, her work has been presented throughout Canada and internationally. Camille is the founder of Outerregion, an Afrofuturist performance group. She has lectured at various institutions such as University of Toronto, Algoma University and Toronto School of Art and is a graduate of Ontario College of Art and Design and York University's Masters in Environmental Studies program where she is currently a PhD candidate.

Her recent projections, solo and group exhibitions include: *Freedom Tours: Dual Dissonance, A Sense of Site*, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, 2019; *The Life of Things*, MOMENTA Biennale de l'image, Montréal, 2019; *Afronautic Research Lab. Arts Against Postracialism*, Artexte, Montréal, 2018; *The Final*

Frontier, at; into; across, Ulrich Museum of Art—Wichita State University, Wichita, 2018; *Triangle Trade*, The Fabulous Festival of Fringe Film, Durham / Segal Center Film Festival on Theatre and Performance, New York, 2018; *Triangle Trade*, Gallery TPW, Toronto, 2017; *Family Matters*, McIntosh Gallery—Western University, London, 2017; *Wanted*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto / SixtyEight Art Institute, Copenhagen, 2017. Website: camilletturner.com



Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau,
What Do Stones Smell Like in the Forest? (video still), 2018

Chloë Lum and Yannick Desranleau are multidisciplinary visual artists based in Montreal, Canada. Their work focuses on theatricality and the choreographic; in their performance work but also in their interest in staging tableaux and working with ephemeral materials that can be said to perform through re-deployment and decay. The duo's recent works investigate the agency of objects, the material condition of the body, and the transformative potential that bodies and objects exert upon each other. These interests are informed by Chloë's experience with chronic illness and its effect on their collaboration as well the duo's exploration of narrative tropes from literature, theatre and television. Lum and Desranleau are also known on the international music scene as co-founders of the avant-rock group AIDS Wolf,

for whom they also produced award-winning concert posters under the name Séripop. In 2016, Desranleau was awarded the Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Fellowship in Contemporary Art, and in 2015, the duo was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award.

Their recent solo and group exhibitions include *What Do Stones Smell Like In The Forest?*, Gallery TPW, Toronto, 2019; *What Do Stones Smell Like In The Forest?*, FoFA Gallery, Montréal, 2018; Biennale d'art performatif de Rouyn-Noranda, Rouyn-Noranda, 2018; Carteles de Quebec, Centro Provincial de Artes Plasticas Y Diseño, Habana, Cuba, 2018; *Realms II*, Gordon Snelgrove Gallery, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 2018; *Is It The Sun Or The Asphalt All I See Is Bright Black*, Circa Art Actuel, Montreal, 2017; *Performance via la caméra*, Galerie Hugues Charbonneau, Montréal, 2017; *Standing Under Mis*, Katzman Contemporary, Toronto, 2017; *5 Tableaux (It Bounces Back)*, Or Gallery, Vancouver, 2017; *Rome*, Kiehle Gallery, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, Minnesota, 2017. Website: lum-desranleau.com



Victoria Sin, *Part Three/Cthuthu Through the Looking Glass*
from the series *Narrative Reflections on Looking* (video still), 2017

Victoria Sin is an artist using speculative fiction within performance, moving image, writing, and print to interrupt normative processes of desire, identification, and objectification. This includes:

Drag as a practice of purposeful embodiment questioning the reification and ascription of ideal images within technologies of representation and systems of looking,

Science fiction as a practice of rewriting patriarchal and colonial narratives naturalized by scientific and historical discourses on states of sexed, gendered and raced bodies,

Storytelling as a collective practice of centering marginalized experience, creating a multiplicity of social contexts to be immersed in and strive towards.

Drawing from close personal encounters of looking and wanting, their work presents heavily constructed fantasy narratives on the often-unsettling experience of the physical within the social body.

Their recent solo and group exhibitions, screenings and performances include *Transformer: The Rebirth of Wonder*, 180 The Strand, London, 2019; *Rewriting the Future*, Site Gallery, Sheffield, 2019; *Age of You*, MOCA, Toronto, 2019; *The Life of Things*, MOMENTA Biennale de l'image, Montreal, 2019; *Kiss My Genders*, Hayward Gallery, London, 2019; *Display*, Dortmunder Kunstverein, Dortmund, 2019; *Meetings on Art*, Venice Biennale, Venice, 2019; *Rising Up in the Infinite Sky*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2019; *A Doll's House*, Goethe Institut, Baku, 2019; *Do Disturb Festival*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2019; Chi Wen Gallery, Art Basel Hong Kong, 2019; *If I had the words to tell you we wouldn't be here now*, Chi-Wen Gallery, Taipei, 2019; *Bona Drag*, RISD Museum, Providence, 2018; *YAEJI One More Tour*, The Knockdown Center, New York, 2018; *Riding and Dying with You*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2018; *DRAG*, Hayward Gallery, London, 2018; *Park Nights*, Serpentine Galleries, London, 2018; *Reproductive Technologies*, Market Gallery, Glasgow, 2018; *Swinging Out Over the Earth*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2018; *Indifferent Idols* (solo), Taipei Contemporary Art Centre, Taipei, 2018; *Non-Linear: Magnet 2* with LUX Scotland, CCA Cinema, Glasgow, 2018. Website: victoriasin.co.uk

List of Works

Ground Floor

Victoria Sin

Narrative Reflections on Looking, series, 2016–17

1. *Preface/Looking Without Touching*, 2016

Single channel HD video, 1 min 7 secs

2. *Part One/She Was More Than the Sum of My Parts*, 2016

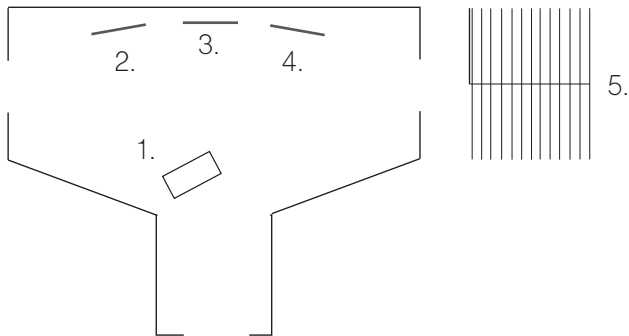
Single channel HD video, 3 mins 36 secs

3. *Part Two/The Reprise of Cthulhu*, 2016

Single channel HD video, 3 mins 31 secs

4. *Part Three/Cthulhu Through the Looking Glass*, 2017

Single channel HD video, 4 mins 2 secs

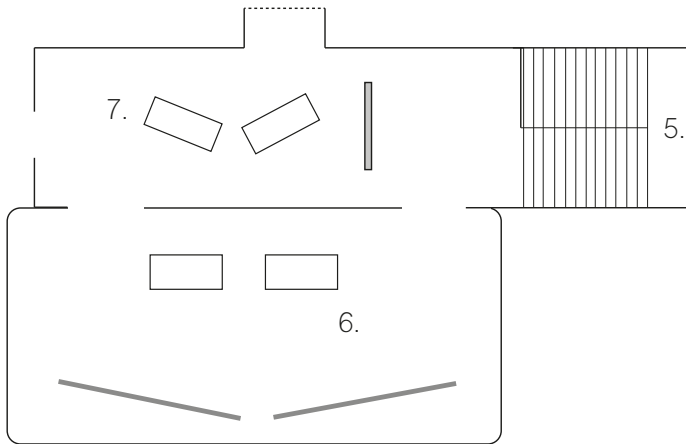


Stairwell

5. Jérôme Havre, Cauleen Smith, and Camille Turner, *Triangle Trade*, 2017

Single channel HD video, 14 mins 31 secs

First Floor



6. Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau, *What Do Stones Smell Like in the Forest?*, 2018

Two-channel HD video, 18 mins 22 secs

*Performance

Chloë Lum & Yannick Desranleau, *Becoming Unreal* (2018–ongoing)

Live performance featuring Soprano singer Eilidh Thomson,
23 January 2020.

6. Study Area

A selection of suggested reading material selected by the artists and Cooper Gallery that reference and expand upon the ideas within the exhibition. Full list on following pages.

Suggested Further Reading by:

Cooper Gallery

Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman, All Too Human, The Memoirs and Aspirations of a Posthumanist*, (Utrecht University, 2017)

Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *After the Last Man: Images and Ethics of Becoming Otherwise*, (e-flux journal #35, 2012)

Susan Sontag, *Notes on Camp* in, *Against Interpretation* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966)

Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of others*, (Penguin, 2004)

Giorgio Agamben, *Nudities*, (Stanford University Press, 2010)

Alain Badiou, *True Communism Is the Forgeinness of Tomorrow*, (Verso Blog, 2014)

To Exist is to Resist, Black Feminism in Europe, Eds. Awkugo Emejulu and Francesca Sobande, (Pluto Press, 2019)

The Foucault Reader, Michel Foucault, Ed. Paul Rabinow, (Penguin 1991)

Jérôme Havre, Cauleen Smith and Camille Turner

Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*, (Vintage Canada, 2002)

Rinaldo Walcott, *Black Like Who*, (Insomniac Press, 2018)

Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women And The Cartographies Of Struggle*, (University Of Minnesota Press, 2006)

Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness And Being*, (Duke University Press, 2016)

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008)

Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*, (The Women's Press, 1988)

Emmie McLuskey for Outwith Reading Group

Park McArthur & Constantina Zavitsanos, *The Guild of the Brave Poor Things*, (MIT, 2017)

Mariana Ortega, *Hometactics*, (Hypatia, 2014)

Andre Lepecki *Choreography as an Apparatus of Capture* (The Drama Review, Vol, 51, 2007).

Victoria Sin

Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, (Duke University Press, 2007)

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color*, In: Martha Albertson Fineman, Rixanne Mykitiuk, Eds. *The Public Nature of Private Violence*, (Routledge, 1994)

Joan Roughgarden, *The Genial Gene: Deconstructing Darwinian Selfishness*, (University of California Press, 2009)

Teresa De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction (Theories of Representation and Difference)*, (Macmillan, 1989)

Karen Barad, *Transmaterialities, Trans*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings*, (Duke University Press, 2015)

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching: A Book about the Way and the Power of the Way*, (Shambhala Publications Inc, 2019)

Octavia E. Butler, *Dawn*, (Warner Books, 1987)

Ursula le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, (Terra Ignota, 2019)

Samuel R. Delany, *Babel-17*, (Gateway 2010)

Samuel R. Delany, *Trouble on Triton: An Ambiguous Heterotopia*, (Wesleyan University Press, 1996)

Film:
I.K.U., (dir.) Shu Lea Cheang, (Aries, 2001)

Artist's publications:
Dream Babes: Speculative Futures, Eds. Victoria Sin, (PSS, 2017)

Dream Babes: 2.0, Eds. Victoria Sin, (PSS, 2019)

Online:
Eric Pussyboy, *From scientific fictions to postpornographic tales*, (Auto Italia, 2016)

Shu Lea Cheang in conversation with Victoria Sin (Auto Italia, 2016)

Judith Butler, *When gesture becomes event*, (TPP2014, Labo LAPS YouTube, 2014)

Chloë Lum and Yannick Desranleau

Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, (Duke University Press, 2006)

Arjun Appadurai, (ed.) *The Social Life of Things*, (Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Karen Barad, *Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter*, (Signs: Journal of Women in Culture, 2003)

Dodie Bellamy, *When the Sick Rule The World*, (Semiotext(e), 2015)

Amy Berkowitz, *Tender Points, (Timeless Infinite Light*, 2015)

Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2012)

Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature*. (University of Chicago Press, 2003)

Mary Ruefle, *My Private Property*, (Wave Books, 2016)
Judith Butler, *Senses of the Subject*, (Fordham University Press, 2015)

Mel Y Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, (Duke University Press, 2012)

Eli Clare, *Exile & Pride: Disability, Queerness and Liberation*, (Reprint South End Press, 2009)

Rick Dolphijn & Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies*, (Open Humanities Press, 2012)

Bob Flanagan, *The Pain Journal*, (Semiotext(e), 2001)

Eliazabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, (Indiana University Press, 1994)

Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, (Duke University Press, 2011)

Graham Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism*, (Washington: Zero Books, 2010)

Virginia Woolf, *On Being Ill*, (Paris Press, (1930) 2012)
Donna J. Haraway, *A Cyborg Manifesto. In Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Free Association Press, 1991)

Andrew Hewitt, *Social Choreography: Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement*, (Duke University Press, 2005)

Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing The Subject*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1998)

Clarice Lispector
— *Agua Viva*, translated by Stefan Tobler, (New Directions, 2012)
— *The Chadelier*, translated by Benjamn Moser and Magdalena Edwards, (New Directions, 2018)
— *The Passion According To G.H.* translated by Idra Novey, (New Directions, 2012)

Kurt McVey, *The Backbone of Rebecca Horn*. Interview, May 2014.

Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, (Oxford University Press, 1987)

Peter Schwenger, *The Tears of Objects: Melancholy and Physical Objects*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2006)

Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*, (University of Michigan Press, 2003)

Alexis Soloski, Working Practice: Christophr McElroen. *Modern Painters*, November 2007: 112.

Bill Brown, *Thing Theory*, *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (Autumn 2001)

Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*, (Picador, 1990)

Jeanette Winterson, Jeanette Winterson interviews Rebecca Horn for her Retrospective at The Hayward Gallery. *The Guardian*, May 23, 2005.

Elizabeth Wright, My Prosthetic and I: Identity *Representation in Bodily Extension*. *FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts*, no. 08 (Spring 2009).

Cooper Gallery would like to thank

The artists: Yannick Desranleau, Jérôme Havre, Chloë Lum, Cauleen Smith, Victoria Sin and Camille Turner for their creative energy and commitment towards realising this exhibition.

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Soprano Singer Eilidh Thomson.

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Our colleagues at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, and University of Dundee.

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Ambiguous Becoming: Artists' Moving Image from Canada is co-curated by Sophia Yadong Hao (Cooper Gallery, DJCAD) and Maude Johnson (MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image).

Open: 24 January – 22 February 2020
Mon – Fri: 10am–5pm | Sat: 11am–5pm

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Cooper Gallery



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Québec

